

May 13, 2009

Dear Friends,

I wanted to take a moment to update you on what I have been doing as your representative in Congress over my first 100 days in office.

Congress and the new administration began the year facing challenges unprecedented in generations. Our top priority has been trying to turn around our ailing economy. While we still have a long way to go, I'm pleased to report that we have already taken important steps to slow the recession and lay the groundwork for future growth while keeping people working.

I was proud to support the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, which the President signed into law in February and which is providing critically needed resources to families and communities across America. Thanks to the recovery legislation, 95 percent of Americans are already paying lower taxes, making it easier for families to make ends meet. Greater Cincinnati has received more than \$100 million in funding for transportation, public safety, clean energy projects, veterans, and education. The recovery legislation is saving and creating jobs throughout the First District, helping communities that are struggling to provide basic services, and starting to repair our crumbling infrastructure.

Investing in our infrastructure is critical to jumpstarting Cincinnati's economy and putting people back to work. That's why I am proud to be leading a bipartisan effort to modernize the Brent Spence Bridge corridor. Along with Republican Senator George Voinovich and Kentucky Congressman Geoff Davis, I am working with local leaders and developers to move this project forward. I also introduced a measure that will increase available resources for sewer repairs to help meet greater Cincinnati's \$3 billion need to overhaul our aging sewer system.

Small businesses are another key driver of our economy and a critical source of new jobs. While the recovery legislation has made it easier for small businesses to borrow money, I am supporting efforts to cut taxes even further for middle class Americans. I have cosponsored a bill that would increase the tax deduction from \$5,000 to \$20,000 for individuals trying to start a new business. This measure would put more money back in the pockets of small business owners to reinvest in growth and job creation.

But while we focus on fixing our economy, we are also making progress on other issues important to the First District.

I pledged that honoring our commitment to our veterans would be a top priority for me in Congress. I reaffirmed this commitment after I visited our brave troops in Iraq and Afghanistan in February shortly after I was sworn into office. That's why I introduced the Veterans Mental Health Accessibility Act as one of my first pieces of legislation. This bill would make it easier for veterans to obtain US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) healthcare services. Under current regulations, veterans have a five-year window to gain easy access to healthcare for service-related conditions. My bill would eliminate that window for mental health conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which often does not manifest itself until years after veterans have concluded their service. The men and women who have served this country in uniform have earned our respect and support, and I will continue to push for measures to ensure that they receive the benefits to which they are entitled.

It has been a busy first few months in Washington, but my top priority remains serving greater Cincinnati. I hope to see you soon at a Congress on Your Corner event, and my staff in Cincinnati and Washington is always available to listen to your concerns and offer their assistance.

Thank you for the honor of serving the First District of Ohio.

Steve Driehaus

Member of Congress